



Town of Fairfield

Office of the First Selectwoman

Brenda L. Kupchick
First Selectwoman
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725 Old Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824

February 24, 2022

Planning and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2100
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 5170 - *AN ACT CONCERNING THE TETHERING AND SHELTERING OF DOGS*

To: Chairmen McCarthy Vahey and Cassano, Ranking Members Hwang and Zullo, and esteemed Members of the Planning and Development Committee

CC: Robert Kalamaras, Fairfield Police Chief and Paul Miller, Fairfield Animal Control Officer

I am writing to share my strong support for House Bill 5170. This important bill establishes requirements for the adequate sheltering of dogs and adds additional requirements concerning the tethering of dogs.

The Connecticut legislature passed a bill that included certain guidelines and restrictions regarding tethering dogs and some of that language must be revised. Animal Control Officers (ACOs) and residents across our State have shared countless stories of dogs left outside, tethered from a few hours to 24 hours, seven days a week. The news reports each year on dogs who suffer and die from heatstroke or hypothermia due to being left outside without adequate shelter and unable to protect themselves from extreme weather conditions. The welfare of these animals is dependent upon their owners. Though we may not see it in our day-to-day lives, this issue is prevalent in the jobs of ACOs, and they deserve the ability to assist in cases of animal neglect and abuse. The Town of Fairfield is in full support of this request so that our Police and ACOs can act together when they believe a domestic animal is in danger.

Owning a dog, or any pet, comes with many of the same responsibilities one would have caring for a child. Among these responsibilities are physical, daily management and continuing oversight, socialization, health care, safety, and economic accountability. The Town of Fairfield is working hard toward establishing an ordinance that coincides with House Bill 5170 which highlights these responsibilities and other statutes dog owners must follow.

For years, I joined animal welfare proponents and fellow legislators advocating for language which would protect defenseless dogs from inhumane treatment. After much debate and work, the State Legislature passed the tethering law, however, the adequate shelter language did not make it

through the process. Since then, legislators, including when I served, repeatedly tried each year to add adequate shelter language to the Tethering Statute.

Some of the issues raised over the years have been regarding working/hunting dogs. Legislators, along with ACOs and members of the Task Force to Study the Humane Treatment of Animals, have discussed this issue at length, and language I believe can be revised to address this important issue fully.

This bill will give ACOs the tools they have been asking for many years to protect dogs from negligent owners and take remedial action before an animal endures suffering. This bill will enable ACOs to make the determination if an animal is not being treated humanely. It has been long overdue for enacting this bill when it was passed by the House in 2018 (HB 5355), but the Senate adjourned early and never officially enacted it. We are simply advocating for a common-sense law to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

I implore you to take this bill into further consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 5170.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter being a large capital 'B'.

Brenda Kupchick
First Selectwoman